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Approved For Release 2004/06/15 : CIA-RDP85T00353R000100260015-2

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19 March 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR: Jerry Flynn, NSC Staff

SUBJECT : Cyprus Briefing Paper

1. After five rounds of intercommunal talks and several meetings between mainland Greek and Turkish officials, a Cyprus settlement or even significant progress toward one remains illusive.

2. In an effort to break the impasse, the Greek and Turkish foreign ministers last December agreed on what appeared to be a promising three tiered negotiation process. This envisaged another round of intercommunal talks outside the island where agreement would be reached on the broad outlines of a settlement, followed by the formation of subcommittees in Nicosia that would work out the details with mainland Greek and Turkish experts taking part. The foreign ministers would also meet frequently to iron out differences.

3. The Turks subsequently reversed themselves, insisting that the negotiators meet in Vienna only to appoint the various subcommittees and that all substantive negotiations take place on Cyprus. Fear of the opposition, differences within the coalition on the extent of territory to be given up, and a determination to bring Athens directly into the negotiation process because of distrust of the Makarios government, appear to have prompted the Turkish reversal.

4. The Greek Cypriots saw the Turkish move as an attempt to remove the Cyprus question from the international limelight by burying the various issues in subcommittees. Further complicating the matter is Athens' reluctance to become directly involved in formulating a settlement that inevitably will be unfavorable for the Greek Cypriots because of the impact that would have on domestic Greek politics.

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5. When it became clear that the Turkish Cypriots would not present concrete proposals at the fifth round of talks set for mid-February in Vienna, the Greek Cypriots followed suit. A breakdown of the fifth round was avoided only when UN Secretary General Waldheim, under whose auspices the negotiations have been held, made some suggestions on possible Turkish Cypriot territorial concessions

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The negotiators agreed to exchange concrete proposals within six weeks and to hold another round of talks in Vienna in May, following which the issues would be referred to subcommittees.

6. The agreements at the last Vienna round have already begun to unravel however.

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Turkish Cypriot "presidential" and "parliamentary" elections that are set for June 20 and account in part for Denktash's continued reticence to present concrete proposals, make it likely that the next Vienna round will have to be postponed until after the balloting is completed.

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